

MICHIGAN STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY

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October 23, 2013

MEMO TO: Senate Reforms, Restructuring, and Reinvention Committee
FROM: Kenneth Elmassian, DO, President
RE: Senate Bills 575-578

On behalf of the Michigan State Medical Society, I would like to express the appreciation of the physician community to the Chair of the Committee as well as the sponsors of this important legislation. It was an unfortunate set of circumstances that has required legislative intervention with respect to conflict of interest on the Board of Medicine and other professional boards in Michigan. MSMS provided testimony at the April 30 Judiciary hearing where the initial discussion of this matter occurred. At that time we made the following statement:

"The Michigan State Medical Society is supportive of legislative efforts that restore the public trust with the Board of Medicine by enacting additional safeguards to avoid similar events from occurring into the future. The self regulation by professional boards has been a highly successful regulatory model. The recent alleged actions by an individual member of the Board is truly the exception. Therefore, it is our hope that legislative efforts attempt to preserve the autonomy of the Board of Medicine and whatever changes do not interfere with the ability to handle disciplinary matters in a timely fashion."

While we are still formally reviewing the content of Senate Bills 575-578, we believe that the sponsors have gone to great lengths to appropriately protect the public while allowing the professional boards to continue operate in an efficient and autonomous manner. Senate Bills 575-578 are narrowly focused on enacting procedural requirements and creating oversight authority for the boards that greatly reduce the likelihood of similar lapses occurring in the future.

As was stated at the April 30 Judiciary hearing, MSMS is supportive of efforts that restore the public trust in the Board of Medicine. To that end, MSMS is conceptually supportive of Senate Bills 575-578. MSMS has attempted to be a constructive partner in the crafting of this legislation. In that regard, it is important to note that the sponsors and their staffs have been receptive to input from the medical community that helps to achieve the stated intent of the legislation. MSMS is confident that the sponsors will continue to work with the physician community to address any concerns that may be identified as this important legislation progresses through the legislative process.